

# COINS

## U.S. 'hard times token' crops up in farm field

By Roger Boye

**T**his week's column answers more questions from Tribune readers.

**Q**—While working a field on my farm, I found an unusual coin dated 1837. It's somewhat corroded, but I can make out the words "substitute for shinplasters; specie payments suspended." What do I own?—J. S. Dyer, Ind.

**A**—You have a "hard times token" minted during a severe depression that started when Andrew Jackson was President. Coins disappeared from circulation due to massive hoarding of "hard money"; to make change, many businessmen issued tokens with various political and patriotic slogans.

Your piece would retail for about \$3 if it is in "fine condition," dealers say. The price is modest because relatively few people collect such mementos of America's past.

**Q**—I've purchased several Krugerrands through the mail, and will get delivery in 12 to 15 weeks. Is that reasonable?—S. F., Chicago.

**A**—No. Under normal circumstances, you should wait no longer than three weeks for coins ordered by mail. You'd get immediate delivery if you bought the coins locally from a coin dealer or bank.

**Q**—I have a blank coin. There's no doubt it should have been a penny because I received it when given three other pennies. I'd like to know what it's worth.—E. Z., Dolton.

**A**—Your "unstruck cent slug" would retail from \$1 to \$5, according to expert Alan Herbert. The error is rather common among collectors.